

SPEAN LODGE



Welcome

TO THE WELL RED ROOM

A stylish double room, with a delightful garden view



Welcome to Spean Lodge

We're really pleased you've chosen to stay with us and hope you'll feel at home from the moment you arrive.

Whether you're here to climb a mountain, chase the Jacobite steam train, keep an eye out for Nessie, or simply switch off for a few days, we hope your time in the Highlands is one to remember.

We've put together this guide to help you get the most from your stay. Inside you'll find a little about the Lodge, some practical information, and a few of our favourite places to explore nearby.

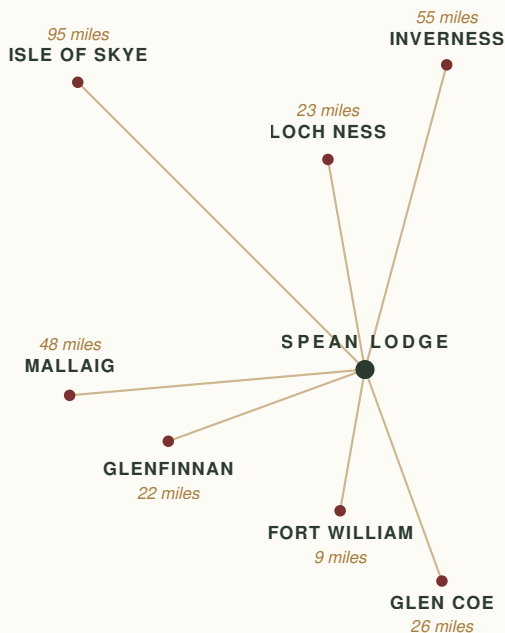
If you need anything at all, or you're looking for a recommendation that isn't in these pages, just ask. We're always happy to help.

Have a wonderful stay.

Paul, Tina & Nige

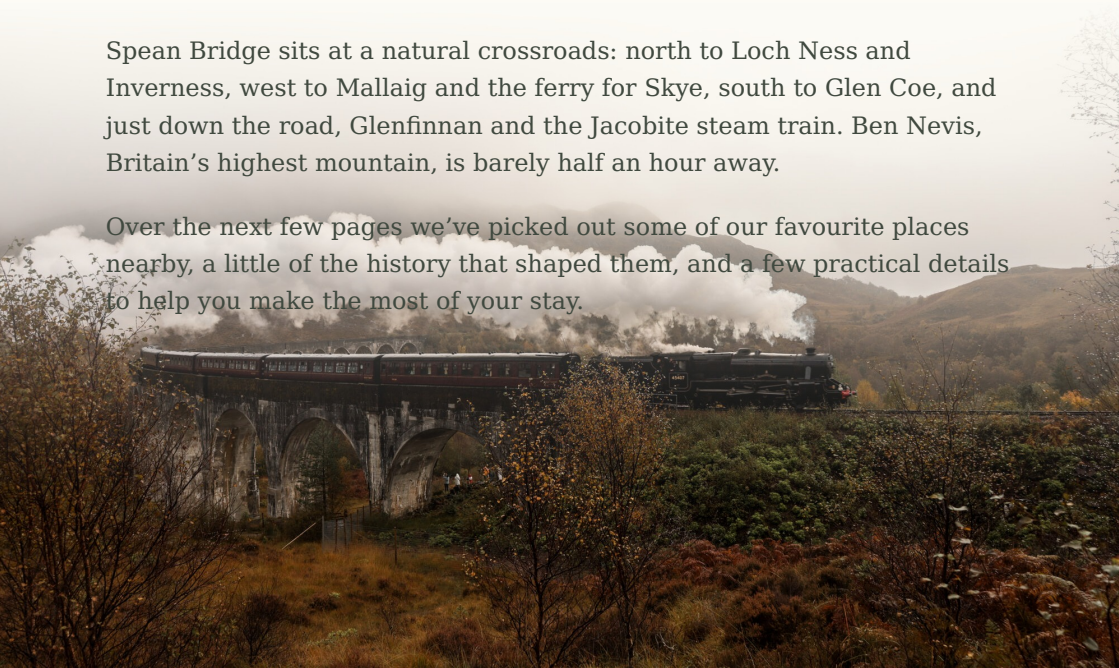


The Middle of Everywhere

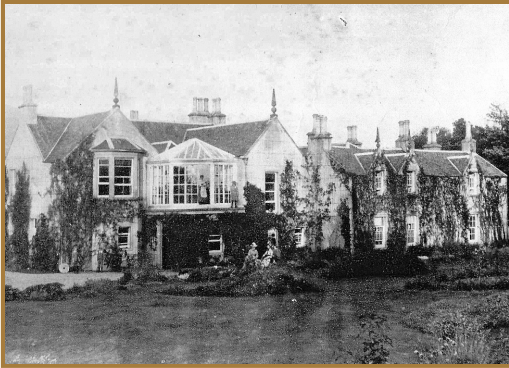


Spean Bridge sits at a natural crossroads: north to Loch Ness and Inverness, west to Mallaig and the ferry for Skye, south to Glen Coe, and just down the road, Glenfinnan and the Jacobite steam train. Ben Nevis, Britain's highest mountain, is barely half an hour away.

Over the next few pages we've picked out some of our favourite places nearby, a little of the history that shaped them, and a few practical details to help you make the most of your stay.



A House



When Thomas Telford arrived to build the stone bridge over the River Spean in 1819, a modest house was probably already standing close to where the Lodge is today. By 1840 it had grown into something grander — the rambling, slightly eccentric building you're staying in now — with a riverside wing

added in 1878.

From the 1870s, the Davy family made Spean Lodge their home for over a hundred years. George Baynton Davy inherited his fortune from his father, who had spent years in South America organising the extraction of guano — bird droppings, to be precise, though a rather more profitable business than it sounds. He and his wife, Martha

MacKay — daughter of a local Fort William lawyer — raised six children here, with fourteen staff to help run the household by 1887.

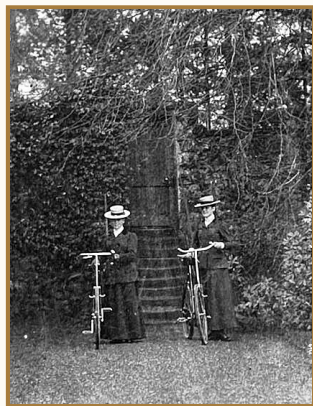


The six Davy children grew up playing in these same gardens — tennis, croquet, and skating on nearby ponds and burns come winter. One of them, Lila, went on to serve with distinction in France and Belgium during the First World War.

The Lodge must have rung out with six children's laughter drifting across the lawns, and a small army of staff trying valiantly to keep some order.

With a Story

George was also a generous local benefactor, funding the building of St Andrew's Episcopal Church in Fort William. The family kept an open house for guests too, drawn by the deer stalking, fishing and shooting that made this corner of Lochaber so popular with Victorian visitors.



Long before motor cars reached Spean Bridge, a bicycle was as good a way as any to explore it — and the grounds, with their winding paths and towering hedges, made for a fine place to learn.



These photographs come from the family's own albums, thought to date from around the 1890s — and it's not hard to recognise the doorway, the ivy and the garden paths that are still here today. By all accounts, it was a leisured and rather genteel life at the Lodge back then.

At the Crossroads of Scottish History

You don't have to travel far from Spean Lodge to stand where history changed course, more than once.

Not everything that happened in this corner of Lochaber makes comfortable reading. Barely a generation before the Jacobite Rising, in February 1692, government soldiers under Robert Campbell of Glenlyon had spent nearly two weeks as guests of the MacDonalds of Glencoe, eating at their tables and sleeping under their roofs, before turning on their hosts in the night on secret orders from Edinburgh. Around 38 MacDonalds were killed outright, and more died fleeing into the snow. It remains one of the most notorious breaches of hospitality in Scottish history — a stain that Glencoe, a short drive south, has never quite shaken off.



The Three Sisters of Glen Coe, above the site of the 1692 massacre.

The old military road that once ran past the Lodge carries its own chapter in that same restless history. Built by General Wade in the 1720s and 30s to help government troops move quickly through a Highlands the Crown still didn't fully trust, it linked Fort William to Fort Augustus and beyond. Twenty years later, that same road would witness the opening shots of a rebellion against the very government that built it.

On 16 August 1745, a party of just eleven Macdonald clansmen and a piper ambushed two companies of government troops marching along it to reinforce Fort William. Using noise and nerve rather than numbers, they convinced eighty-five redcoats they were hopelessly outnumbered. Several government soldiers were killed or wounded before their commander surrendered — the Jacobites, it's said, didn't lose a man. It was the first military action of the Jacobite Rising of 1745, fought on a spot known simply as Highbridge, a short walk from where you're staying.



The Glenfinnan Monument, marking the spot where Bonnie Prince Charlie landed in 1745.

Three days later, Bonnie Prince Charlie raised his standard at Glenfinnan, formally declaring the rising that would carry his army as far south as Derby, only 125 miles from London, before nerve failed and they turned for home. Panic had already reached London by then.

Did it change the course of Scottish history? Not in

the way the Jacobites intended — the Stuarts never did reclaim the throne. But the rising's defeat at Culloden the following year brought an end to the clan system as it had existed for centuries, reshaping the Highlands in ways still visible today. Between Glencoe and Culloden, in less than a lifetime, the old Highlands were changed forever.

The story doesn't end there. Two centuries later, these same hills took on a different role, when the rugged terrain around Spean Bridge became the training ground for Britain's first Commando units during the Second World War — chosen, like so much of this landscape, because the ground itself doesn't make anything easy. The Commando Memorial, just a mile up the hill, looks out over the hills where they trained: one more layer in a landscape that has rarely stood still.



The Commando Memorial at Spean Bridge, dedicated to the men who trained here.

Where Will Tomorrow Take You?

Here are a few suggestions from us.



Commando Memorial & Highbridge Walk

Exit the Lodge on to the main road, turn left over the bridge, then left up the hill (A82). After five minutes, on your left will be a gate signed 'Highbridge.'



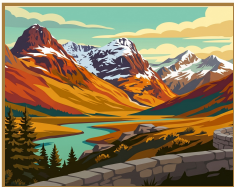
Glen Roy Parallel Roads

Three distinct horizontal lines run perfectly along the hillside, ice-age shorelines of a long-vanished loch. Darwin studied them in 1838, later admitting his thesis was 'one long gigantic blunder.'



Glenfinnan

The Monument marks where Bonnie Prince Charlie landed in 1745. The Jacobite steam train crosses the viaduct each morning — try to arrive before 9am for parking.



Glen Coe

Glen Coe is a breathtaking glen, with countless incredible walks. Stop for lunch at the Kingshouse Hotel — ask reception to validate your parking. Across the road in Glen Etive, recreate the famous scene from the James Bond film *Skyfall*.



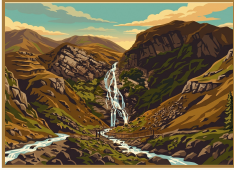
Camusdarach Beach

White sand and turquoise water make Camusdarach one of Scotland's finest beaches, with views across to the islands of Eigg, Rum and Skye. Famously featured in the film *Local Hero*.



Western Isles Cruises

Board a boat from Mallaig harbour for an hour-long cruise through some of Scotland's richest waters, keeping watch for seals, dolphins, minke whales and white-tailed sea eagles overhead.



Steall Falls

One of Scotland's highest waterfalls, reached by a dramatic wire bridge across the gorge. Park in the last car park — the round trip takes about two hours.



Isle of Skye

Skye is known as the Misty Isle, home to the jagged Cuillin ridge, the Fairy Pools and the Old Man of Storr. It's a full day out, but worth it — a stunning drive there and back from the Lodge.



Neptune's Staircase

A flight of eight locks on the Caledonian Canal, designed by Thomas Telford. Watch boats climb the 'staircase' at Banavie, just a short drive from the Lodge.



Urquhart Castle & Loch Ness

Ruins of a 13th-century castle on the shores of Loch Ness, one of Scotland's most photographed views. Keep your eyes on the water — you might just spot Nessie.



West Highland Museum, Fort William

A small museum with an outstanding Jacobite collection — including a secret portrait of Bonnie Prince Charlie, hidden in plain sight. A good option if the weather turns.



Nevis Range Gondola

Take the gondola up Aonach Mòr for sweeping views across Lochaber and the Great Glen. In summer, hire a bike and ride part of the way back down.

Making Yourself at Home



Breakfast

Served between 8–9am. To keep things relaxed, we ask guests to book a time the evening before.

Heating

The Highland weather likes to keep us guessing. If you'd like the room a little warmer, just let us know.

Showers

Eco mode usually gives the best shower. Full power can get surprisingly hot.

Room Refresh

If your room could use a little tidying, just hang the door hanger on the handle.

Check-Out

10am. If you need a hand with luggage, just ask.

In The Lounge

Make yourself at home by the fire, and help yourself to a dram — just let us know if you'd like it lit.

The Secret Garden

Head straight out of the Lodge and across the grass. A small sign points the way.

Need Anything?

Just ring the bell in reception — we're always happy to help.



Whether you've spent the day in the hills, by the coast, or following Highland history, you've probably earned a good dinner — and there's plenty within easy reach of Spean Lodge. Here are a few we go to with friends and family.

The Old Station

Right here in the village, just a few minutes' walk — lovely local food.

01397 712535

oldstationrestaurant.com

Ben Nevis Inn

Beautiful food in a stunning location.

01397 701227

ben-nevis-inn.co.uk

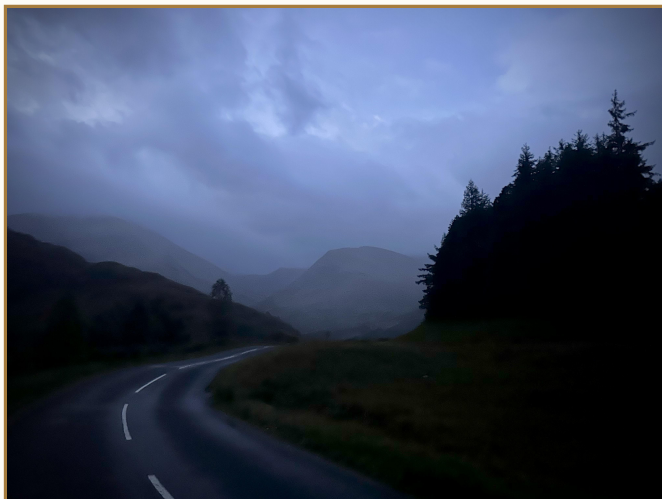
The Old Pines, Gairloch

For a special occasion: a five-course tasting menu, sublime food.

01397 712324

oldpines.co.uk

They're popular, so try to make a reservation — or we're happy to do so on your behalf.



Haste Ye Back!



Guest WiFi
Scan to connect



WhatsApp Us
Anytime you need us



Google
Leave a review



TripAdvisor
Leave a review



Take This With You
Download the guide

*Wifi password: **SpeanGuest***

Useful Numbers

Spean Bridge Pharmacy **01397 712146**

Nevis Taxis **01397 703000**

NHS 24, non-emergency **111**

Police, non-emergency **101**

Emergency **999**

Slàinte, and safe travels.

Paul, Tina & Nige